

Judge Donald R. Johnson, Chief Judge  
Judge William Jorden, Deputy Chief Judge  
Judge Kelly E. Balfour, Deputy Chief Judge  
Judge Fred T. Crifasi  
Judge Wilson E. Fields  
Judge Tiffany Foxworth-Roberts  
Judge Beau Higginbotham



Judge Louise Hines  
Judge Ronald R. Johnson  
Judge Eboni Johnson Rose  
Judge Richard "Chip" Moore  
Judge Brad Myers  
Judge Gail Horne Ray  
Judge Tarvald A. Smith

**Nineteenth Judicial District Court**  
East Baton Rouge Parish

Diana Gibbens  
Interim Judicial Administrator

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**MINUTES**  
**19<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT**  
**BUILDING COMMISSION MEETING**  
**August 30, 2023**

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Judge Eboni Johnson Rose called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. Roll was taken and a quorum was present.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Judge Eboni Johnson Rose (Chair)  
Judge Ronald R. Johnson  
Judge Kelly E. Balfour,  
Deputy Chief Judge (Civil)  
Judge Fred T. Crifasi  
Judge Wilson E. Fields  
Judge Donald R. Johnson, Chief Judge  
Judge William "Will" Jorden,  
Deputy Chief Judge (Criminal)  
Judge Brad Myers  
Judge Tiffany Foxworth-Roberts  
Judge Louise Hines

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Judge Beau Higginbotham  
Judge Gail Horne Ray  
Judge Richard M. "Chip" Moore  
Judge Tarvald A. Smith

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Diana Gibbens, Interim Judicial Administrator  
Charmane Brooks, Judicial Administrator Secretary  
Kim Ford, Finance Director  
Ronnie Bullion, Judicial Administrator Family Court  
Judge Pam Baker, Family Court

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE BUILDING COMMISSION MEETING OF 6-22-23**

Judge Johnson Rose called for the approval of the minutes of the previous meeting. Judge Jorden moved to accept the minutes and Judge Balfour seconded the motion. The minutes were approved without objection.

### III. BUSINESS

#### **BUILDOUT ON FOR FAMILY COURT ON THE 4<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR**

Diana Gibbens confirmed she received a quote \$919.48 total for supplies. A door was located on the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor to be used, only door hardware and hinges need to be purchased. City-Parish will provide the labor for the project, which will total approximately \$1,200. Administrator Gibbens will contact City-Parish to determine a timeline for the project and then communicate with Judge Baker. Judge Hines made a motion to approve the buildout of the wall for Family Court IT Department on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor and Judge Ronald Johnson seconded the motion, motion passed without any objection.

#### **RENOVATIONS TO THE BUILDING (Renovation of 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, sally port, metal cones/barriers at entrance to building)**

Judge Johnson Rose stated a meeting is scheduled for next week with City-Parish to discuss which entity, between City-Parish and Building Commission, is responsible for present and future repairs of the courthouse. Chief Judge Donald Johnson updated the committee on the building renovations. The sally port is to allow the transport of prisoners to enter, unload and exit along the south side of the building. This would eliminate the need to back into St. Louis Street upon exiting the existing sally port. The project would also create enclosed parking spaces for the security team, spaces for ADA and/or law enforcement who need to be present for court. The renovation to the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor is intended to provide space for the Court Intervention Program including Pretrial Services, Commissioners' Court and Specialty Courts. The original plans are being modified to accommodate current needs.

#### **TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES TO COURTROOMS**

Judge Johnson Rose updated the Commission members that the technology upgrade has been completed on two courtrooms. In October, two other courtroom upgrades will be under way. These are scheduled for September 30 – October 1; and October 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>. Judge Johnson Rose also asked the Committee for additional authority to contract \$125,000 over the original \$650,000. The bid for the additional 4 courtroom upgrades, and the backend of the cost for the first 2 courtrooms completed totals \$775,000. Judge Jorden moved to approve the total sum of \$775,000 - \$650,000 previous approved and an additional \$125,000. These funds are to be used for the technology upgrades. Judge Ron Johnson seconded the motion; motion passed with no objection.

#### **ADDITIONAL COURT FEE IN TRAFFIC CASES**

Judge Johnson Rose advised a statute providing for revenue to the Building Commission lapsed in 2021. Since that time there are essentially no revenue funds being generated to fund the Operating Account. Diana Gibbens updated the Commission to provide some historical background on the prior statute. The proposal is to request the approval for a specific traffic court fee designated for the Building Commission. This approval must first come from the Judicial Council at the Louisiana Supreme Court and then through legislation. It is anticipated that such a fee could generate \$75,000 - \$85,000 per year. Judge Balfour moved to seek approval from the Judicial Council to raise the traffic fees to \$15 from a previous \$10 and eliminate the sunset provision. Once approved by the Judicial Council, legislative enactment would be sought for a reenactment of La. R.S. 13:1000.7. Motion was seconded by Judge Jorden; motion passed without objection.

### CELLULAR SERVICE UPGRADES

Diana Gibbens advised the Commission that the current antennas in the courthouse are all 3G which no longer function. The cost to change these to current technology has ranged from \$300,000-\$450,000. This cost was seen to be too high considering the other needs of the court at this time and the matter was placed on hold until further notice.

### RFP FOR COURT SECURITY UPGRADE INCLUDING CAMERA SYSTEM AND ACCESS CONTROL SYSTEM

Judge Johnson Rose asked for Judge Myers, Chair of the Security Committee, to get information from Judge Balfour or Judge Jordan to determine whether the Supreme Court could conduct a security assessment of the 19<sup>th</sup> JDC that could then be used to create an RFP for cameras, access control and any other security enhancements that may be needed or recommended. This item will be placed back on the next Building Commission Meeting Agenda for an update.

### JANITOR BREAK ROOM

Diana Gibbens recommended that the kitchen area adjacent to the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Café area has become a liability in the absence of any tenant in this space. The reality is that there will not be such a tenant ever. The proposal is to sell the kitchen equipment and utilize the funds generated to modify the space for use as a breakroom and locker room for the janitorial staff. Judge Johnson Rose asked for our Interim Judicial Administrator to give an assessment for this to be further discussed on the next Building Commission Meeting.

### 10<sup>th</sup> FLOOR MAINTENANCE ITEMS

Diana Gibbens provided an update that a "punch list" of items in need of repair is being prepared to send to City-Parish maintenance. Previously, she met with Joseph Butler and Larry Cooper to discuss these issues. They are all aware of these needs and are awaiting the list to begin correcting the issues.

#### **IV. UPDATE**

Diana Gibbens shared the Arts Council's request for artist's submissions on the escalator wall project. The submission collected will be shared with the Commission later in the year.

#### **V. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Judge Balfour moved to adjourn and Judge Hines seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 12:51p.m.

APPROVED:



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Judge Eboni Johnson Rose  
Chair